

Acton Historic District Commission
Meeting May 25, 2010
Minutes

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Present were Kathy Acerbo-Bachman (KAB), Ron Rose (RR), Scott Kutil (SK), Michaela Moran (MM), David Barrat (DB) and Mike Gowing (MG) (BoS liaison). Maya Minkin (MMk), Terra Friedrichs, and David Honn were absent. Public attendees: Anne Forbes.

MM stated that only commission members should be sitting at the table. Members of the public should not. The Chair should call on members of the public.

Meeting called to order at 7:37 pm.

Citizens Concerns: Anne Forbes spoke. She showed some pictures from the 1960s that show the mill and show much more of the dam intact. She wants this picture to be filed. She wanted to report about the Morrison Farm feasibility study. She was concerned that no one from either board (? HC? HDC?) was present at the Morrison Farm presentation (site visit??). She thought that the historic preservation aspects of the farm presentation were being given a low priority.

MM recognized MG and he replied to Anne and said that he met with Bill Klaur (sp?) and didn't think that the historic aspects of the farm were being downgraded.

MM said that we received an application about signage at Mass Ave #1018. Will be returned for insufficient information.

40 School St. DB sent out abutters notices. MM said that we need an extension from them. KAB said that she is recusing herself, but she will attend as a member of the public citizen expressing opinions that are wholly her own.

SK asked MM to make it clear that prior meetings with them were informational meetings and that tonight the Commission members will express all the concerns that they have with the project.

MM asked about vacations. SK said that he will be gone June 17 to August. MM said that she will be on vacation the final two weeks in August. DB and RR have not made plans for vacation yet.

Two public hearings tonight are on the foundations and the homes.

Tuesday June 1 at 9 am, MM and RR will go do this meeting to discuss the handicapped railing with Michael Rosenfeld at his office.

5 members of the public present for today's public hearing.

MM read the PH notices. Joe Levine, Alex Parra, and Bruce Ringwold

8:00 pm We started the PH for the 7 foundations at the River St address. MM adjourned this PH until 8:30 pm at the request of the applicant, so that the applicant can give xxx (?) presentation.

At 8:30, MM moved that we reopen the PH for the foundations. She read the notice of PH for application 1066 for the construction of single family homes.

Bruce Ringwold presenting. 7 single family homes, in the revival style. 3 shared driveways. Granite curbing and sidewalk. All have 10-20 ft setback from street. Wood siding.

81 River is the garage door facing the street. 52 ft wide, 48 ft long,
70 River: 30 ft x 70 ft

SK asked about railings. Joe Levine said that the posts would be varied between round and square but the balusters and the hand cut and footrails are consistent on all of the buildings.

No. 6: 77 River St: 30 ft width, 67 ft length

No. 7: 75 River St: 30 ft width, 65 ft length

73 River St: 30 width, 65 length

69 River St: 30 x 65

(there are some calculations on the minutes sheet, not sure what to do with them)

SK asked about the distances between the homes. Bruce said same as all of the distances. MM asked about the stone aprons at the end of the driveway. Are they like stone walls? Bruce answered no.

MM asked about which homes have the most exposed foundations. And the Commission is interested in how the plantings help to hide the exposed foundations. Bruce explained that they have put evergreen shrubs in the landscaping plan in order to hide the exposed concrete. Bruce showed how we have stepped the siding down in order to hide some of the concrete foundation.

MM asked about the retaining walls. Bruce said that the highest ones are 2 feet. They have not chosen the materials. But it could be concrete block or stone walls.

MM asked about the grade at where the garage is. Bruce said that they would be cutting out some of the grade for the garages.

81 River St 2,400 sq ft

others were 2,700 sq ft to 2,800 sq ft

MM asked about FAR calculations. Joe said that he will provide them to the Commission.

MM asked where the brook is.

MM opened the floor to a member of the public. Mr Krug asked about the distance from the sidewalk to the front step. Starting at 69: 9.5, 15, 8 ¾, 11, 10, 8.5, 10.

Bruce mentioned that there's a 10-20 ft setback requirement in the SAV zoning.

KAB, as a member of the public, 50 River St, commended the team for use of wood. She asked about (?turning the house with the garage?) and Bruce said that they wanted to give a lot of green space near Ft Pond Brook. Then she asked how these homes compared to those down the street and in the area. She asked about planting disease resistant elms on the front of the houses on the street. Bruce said with the setback, there is no space. He said 30 ft tree is the largest tree. She asked about hydrangea or boxwood. Bruce said you could put boxwood in the front. She asked about not using shutters on all of the houses. Bruce said he did not know. She said that the most disappointing part was the window alignment and that it be reexamined by the architect. KAB suggested to bring arch (?architect?)...?...(?he suggested about real quality units?)

Rob Hamilton asked about the density. (?Rate?) of house frontage to property frontage. Rob said that large trees are a part of the district, and you can plant them in the side yard but here there is no side yard. This second question was about whether the height of the buildings are the same. He asked why the sidewalk and granite curbs along River St because there are no other sidewalks along River St. MG said that the town is repaving (?) sidewalks.

Anne Forbes asked about materials and specs for doors, windows, etc. MM said that everything is going to be in the application together. She asked if the fiberglass doors were approved on 83-87 River. Joe Levine said yes. Ann asked about railings, windows, muntin width.

MM said that we need to reference both the homes and the foundations together and so she said that we cannot just discuss the foundations. DB wants to approve everything together and its hard to separate it out.

RR asked if they would be building the houses all at once. Joe said that ...?...MM said lets ?per? the discussion.

RR said it's a complex matrix. He said it's difficult in the drawing to decipher (?). Shear size of the buildings is a concern. Street view – RR said that it would be better to be close to the maximum setback. The larger the building, the farther back it should be from the road. Looks better further set back. Porches might look better without the railings. The railings all create a wall. The houses "at grade" could lose thir railings. RR said that you could put in a row of trees. He said that there needs to be some way to make the homes [appear] smaller from the street. As you walk down the street, you have to look down the sides and it has a canyon effect. He agrees with SK that there needs to be a variation in the distances between the homes and more variation.

DB suggested that they could do with one less house.

MM said that, in general, they are too large for the village. 30-40% larger than most of the other houses in the village. Reduced in size, need to be reduced in size. Mr Barton has done a good job with the design detail of each house. MM said the usable yard is very small relative to the house.

MM says that they should vary more from the street.

Mr Parra pointed out that the HDC cannot override zoning requirements.

Mr Parra said that his is worried that the 60 days will expire. MM said that 5/28 (6/23?) is the 60 days expiring. DB moved June 1 at 7:30 to continue the PH.

Meeting adjourned at 10:45.

NOTE: hand written sign in sheet exists for this PH, which should go into the file.